

## Leaving the Nest

Our journey begins from the community centre and library The Nest ①. Walk though Cygnet Square, over to the water's edge – on quieter days geese like to relax here. Look over the lake and you'll spot a bright orange Lakeside building, which is where we're heading. Walking up the lakeside path you'll see a number of floating islands, reed beds and wetlands, which have helped to encourage wildlife and is a handy place for cormorants to dry their wings off.



②

On your left you'll pass Thamesmead's Paint Wall ②, a temporary space which celebrates street art and murals and is constantly changing. Follow the path past the outdoor gym and head into the warmth of the



①

Thamesmead Social ③, a Kitchen, Bar & Event Space. Check out the artwork on the wall – The Lakeside Centre is run by Bow Arts and is a thriving set of art studios. Have a look over the lake and its central fountain.



③

## Ridgeway

Walk outside to the terrace, and you will see a silver building with triangular roofs. This is Southmere Water Sport & Activity Centre ④. The ramp and roof here are a prime meeting place for pigeons and ducks that flock and chatter.



④



⑤

Head up the green grass verge past the boathouse and you find yourself in a long avenue of trees ⑤, likely planted when the lake was formed in the 1960s. At the end of these trees, cross the road carefully and look out

for the ramp on the other side that leads to the Ridgeway – a path full of hedgerow wildlife ⑥ formed on top of a Victorian drain.



⑥

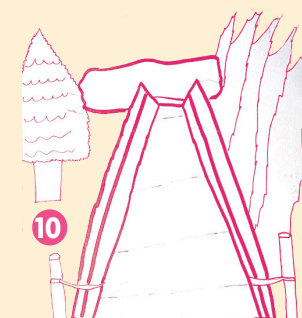
When you pass back down the ramp to the lake on the left you'll see a hidden pond with resident heron, and some beautiful reeds ⑧ overlooking the lake.



⑧

## Marshes and Boardwalks

Next let's walk up the grassy hill to the left passing two stone circles ⑨, and explore Southmere Tiny Forest. Designed and planted by local people, it is an amphitheatre shape (like a circle) with seating that overlooks the lake.



⑩

This side of the lake has a set of lovely winding paths by the water, lined by rope fencing.



⑪

Take one of these paths to the lake's edge, and enjoy the calm lapping water under the fishing platforms ⑩. Find the first path back up the hill and over the brow, and the scene changes completely and you can see the wide flatness of the Erith marshes.

There are horses in the foreground ⑪, which graze on the wild plants and flowers, and a set of wind turbines in the background.



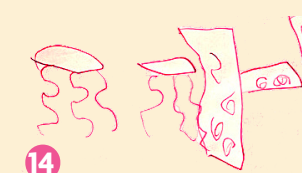
⑫

## The South of Southmere

Head back down the paths to the most wooded area overlooking the lake, and look through the wooden porthole which frame the water here ⑫. Follow the woodchip paths through the trees and you will discover a series of steps cut into the grass hill overlooking the lake and a large smooth stone ⑬, guiding you towards Lesnes or back along the path to Crossness.



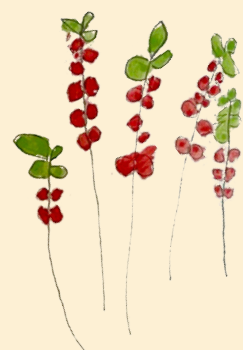
⑬



⑭

You'll see a swing on top of the hill, and there's all sorts of natural playground equipment ⑭ along this ridge all the way to Lesnes Abbey Woods. Once you've finished playing either take a shortcut along

Seacourt Road, watching out for traffic, or complete the full walk by heading back to the lake and following the concrete boardwalks past the iconic Southmere Towers.



You'll pass a set of brightly hand-painted pink and blue concrete structures, showing local wildlife. Our final stop is a large wooden platform with seats and red pillars that overlook The Nest and smaller ponds full of birdlife, surrounded by berries and reeds ⑮.



⑮

From October to December 2024, six Thamesmead schools went on an outdoor sketching tour around Southmere Lake exploring its nature and landscape. Observations were collected and pen and watercolour added and themed sketchbook covers created.

Over 1000 drawings in total were made, of which some can be found on the map and in the walking guide.

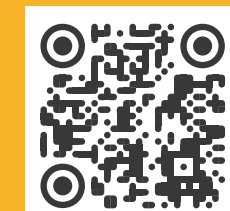
The six local schools were:

- Parkway Primary
- Northwood Primary
- St John Fisher
- Willow Bank Primary
- Harris Garrard Academy Primary
- Harris Garrard Academy Secondary

A few of the sketchbook covers



Scan for more on the project and artwork, here



## Flocking to the lake

From Cormorants to Canada Geese, Mallards to Pigeons, from Swans to Parakeets, birds love to call Southmere Lake their home. Here is a collection of pictures drawn by the young people to show this diversity.





The walk starts at the Nest Community Centre and Library, just a 10 minute walk from Abbey Wood train station.

The total distance is around 1.5 miles, and will take around 45 mins to 1 hour to walk. Use the walking guide on the back of this map to help direct you.

